

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Regarding the Objections to the Drawings:

Fig. 1 has been amended to delete reference numeral 13.

Regarding the Objections to the Specification:

The specification has been amended to correct the errors noted by the Examiner. The corrections do not introduce any new matter.

Regarding the Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 112:

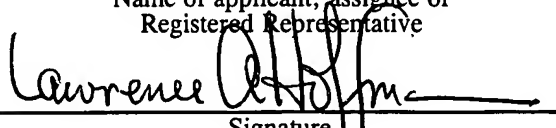
Claims 13-24 have been rewritten as new claims 25-36, respectively, to conform to customary idiomatic English and grammar, and U.S. claim practice. The antecedent errors noted in the Office Action have been corrected in the new claims. With regard to use of the terminology "tube-like" in claim 22, a more apt translation would be - - tubular - -, and that term has been employed in new claim 34.

Regarding The Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 13-24 would be allowable subject to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112. As the rejections are believed to have been overcome in new claims 25-36, these claims should be allowable. However, if there are still any unresolved issues, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact applicant's representative by telephone.

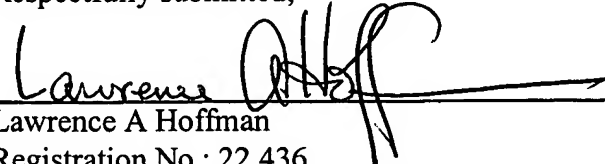
In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully solicited.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the date indicated below.

Lawrence A Hoffman
Name of applicant, assignee or
Registered Representative

Signature
July 7, 2004
Date of Signature

LAH:sks

Respectfully submitted,


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